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An Act To Extend the Summer Tourism Season and Thereby Increase Sales Tax Revenues by Requiring that the School Year in Maine Begin After Labor Day

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §4771, as amended by PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. VVV, §1, is further amended to read:

§ 4771. Eligible institution and semester; defined

As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise indicates, "eligible institution" means the institutions of the University of Maine System, the Maine Community College System and the Maine Maritime Academy. "Semester" means the fall, spring or summer term of an academic year. The fall semester may not begin before the official Labor Day holiday of each year.

Sec. 2. 20-A MRSA §4801, sub-§1, as amended by PL 2005, c. 662, Pt. A, §10, is further amended to read:

1. Number. A school administrative unit shall make provision for the maintenance of all of its schools for at least 180 days a year. A 180-day school year may not begin before the official Labor Day holiday of each year. At least 175 days ~~shall~~must be used for instruction. In meeting the requirement of a 180-day school year, no more than 5 days may be used for in-service education of teachers, administrative meetings, parent-teacher conferences, records' days and similar activities.

A. The commissioner may reduce or waive the minimum number of days required on application from a school board. The application must be supported in writing with a statement of the reasons for the request.

B. Notwithstanding any other section of the statutes, school committees, with the approval of the commissioner, may adopt or amend rules necessary to implement an extended school year at the local level. The commissioner may make appropriate adjustments, not to exceed the allowable subsidy, to ~~insure~~ensure fair and equitable treatment in the distribution of state aid.

C. Notwithstanding this subsection, the commissioner shall ~~promulgate~~adopt a rule to provide that local school units may allow secondary school students to graduate up to 5 school days prior to the regular end of the school year.

D. A school administrative unit, operating under a plan approved by the commissioner, may provide for the use of up to 5 of the 175 instructional days required by this section to be used for screening incoming first year students for the purpose of identifying children with disabilities and students at risk of school failure as required by state or federal law.

E. Notwithstanding this subsection and any other provision of law, for school years 1991-92 and 1992-93, a school administrative unit may reduce the number of days for the maintenance of all its schools by 5 days a year. A school administrative unit that decides to reduce the number of school days for school year 1991-92 or 1992-93, or both, shall notify the commissioner in writing of its plan.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this bill is to extend the summer tourism season, and thus increase sales tax revenues, by requiring that the school year in Maine begin after Labor Day. This bill requires that the school year for Maine public schools and the fall semester for state universities and colleges not begin until after Labor Day of each year.